

"The mighty dead
Who blessed mankind and humanised the world."

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

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A WARNING FOR A WARNING.

[From the French of Emile Souvestre.]

THE date was that of the civil war between the Parliament and King Charles I. The two parties had taken up arms, and were vigorously carrying on the conflict. The king's army had been defeated several times, and those of his adherents taken with arms in their hands were led before judges appointed by Cromwell in every town to be condemned as rebels.

Sir Nicholas Newcastle was one of those judges. He was a man of austere manner, but without fanaticism; his devotion to the new government was well known, and Cromwell had a special esteem for him. His weakly constitution did not allow him to serve in arms for the cause which he thought the just one, but he was looked upon as the most active and able, as well as the most rigorously just magistrate in the country. One evening Sir Nicholas was at supper with his family and a few of his friends, when a band of soldiers arrived with a royalist prisoner, whom they had just succeeded in capturing. He was an officer, who, after the rout of Charles's army, had been vainly trying to reach the coast, and there find means of escape to France. Sir Nicholas ordered his hands to be unbound, and another table to be placed near the fireplace.

"It is my birthday," said he, and I wish to finish merrily the supper which I have begun. Give refreshments to this chevalier and the guards. At present I would be his host; in an hour I will act as his judge."

The soldiers thanked him, and sat down at the table near their prisoner, who did not appear to be much affected by his position, and fell to on the provisions set before him with as good an appetite as any of them.

Sir Nicholas returned to his place at the head of the large table, and resumed the conversation that had been interrupted by the arrival of the soldiers.

"Well, I was telling you," he continued, "that at the age of fifteen I was still so weak and puny that every one scorned my feebleness and took advantage of it to ill-use me. First, I had to endure the bad treatment of a step-mother, then that of my schoolfellows. Courage in boys is only the consciousness of strength. My weakness made me a coward, and, far from hardening me, the roughness and harshness to which I was exposed made me only more shrinking and more sensitive to pain. I lived in a continual state of fear, but above all I feared the master's cane. Twice I had suffered this cruel punishment, and I had preserved such an accurate remembrance of the pain, that the very thought of a third infliction made me tremble all over. I was at Westminster school, as I have already told you. The classes were taught in a large room together, and were separated one from another by a curtain, which we were expressly forbidden to touch. One summer day drowsiness had overtaken me for a moment in the middle of a Greek lesson; then, a slight noise starting me out of my nap, I only saved myself from falling off my seat by catching at the curtain, which was close beside me. It gave way at my grasp, and to my horror, I saw that I had made in it a tear big enough to see the next class through. The two masters turned round at the noise, and at once perceived the damage that had been done. The blame appeared to lie between me and the boy next the curtain on the other side; but my confusion soon pointed me out as the culprit, and my master angrily ordered me to come and have a dozen blows of the cane. I got up staggering like a drunken

man ; I tried to speak to ask pardon, but fear had glued my tongue to my mouth ; my knees trembled under me, a cold perspiration broke out on my face. The instrument of punishment was already raised over me, when I heard some one say : " Do not punish him. It was my fault ? "

" It was the boy on the other side of the curtain. He was at once called forward and received the dozen blows. My first impulse was to prevent this unjust punishment by confessing the truth; but I could not summon up courage, and when the first blow had been given I was ashamed to speak. When the flogging was over the boy passed near me with bleeding hands, and whispered to me with a smile that I shall never forget in all my life : ' Do not meddle with the curtain again, youngster. The cane hurts.'

" I sank down in a fit of sobbing, and they had to send me out of the room. Since that day I have been disgusted with my cowardice, and have done all I can do to overcome it. I hope I have not been altogether unsuccessful."

" And do you know this generous fellow ? " asked one of his guests. " Have you ever seen him again ? "

" Never, unfortunately. He was not in my class, and left the school soon afterward. Ah ! God knows that I have often wished to meet with the gallant fellow who suffered so much for me, and that I would give years of my life to be able to shake hands with him at my table."

At that moment a glass was held out toward Sir Nicholas, who lifted his eyes in astonishment. It was the royalist prisoner, who laughingly proposed a toast :

" To the memory of the torn curtain at Westminster ! But, upon my word, Sir Nicholas, your memory is not so accurate as mine. It was not twelve blows that I received, but twice twelve—for having exposed another to punishment, and not at once declaring myself to blame."

" You are right ; now I remember. But in what a situation ! in what a service ! " exclaimed the judge.

" In the service of my king, Sir Nicholas. I was not going to be the first of my family who had played the traitor. My father has already died in arms, and I expect no better fate. Never mind ; I only ask one thing : God save the king ! "

With these words the royalist returned to his place among the soldiers and continued his repast. Sir Nicholas sat silent

and thoughtful. That very night, after having given orders that the prisoner was to be well treated, he left home without saying where he was going, and was gone three days. On the fourth day he arrived, and ordered the royalist officer to be brought before him.

" Are you going to settle my affair at length ? " asked he, coolly. " It is time to do so, were it only for humanity's sake. They treat me so well at your house, Sir Nicholas, that before long I shall come to wish to retain life."

" My friend," said the judge with a grave face, but in a voice trembling with emotion, " twenty years ago you said to me, ' Do not meddle with the curtain, youngster, for the cane hurts ! ' Here is your pardon, signed by the Lord Protector ; but in my turn I say to you, ' Do not take up arms against the Parliament, for Cromwell is not easy to deal with.' " A warning for a warning.

NOTHING TO DO.

" NOTHING to do ! " in this world of ours,
Where weeds spring up with the fairest flowers,
Where smiles have only a fitful play,
Where hearts are breaking every day !

" Nothing to do ! " thou *Christian soul* !
Wrapping thee round in thy selfish stole !
Off with the garments of sloth and sin !
Christ thy Lord hath a kingdom to win.

" Nothing to do ! " there are minds to teach
The simplest forms of Christian speech.
There are hearts to lure with loving wife
From the grimmest haunts of sin's defile.

" Nothing to do ! " there are lambs to feed,
The precious hope of the Church's need.
Strength to be borne to the weak and faint,
Vigils to keep with the doubting saint.

" Nothing to do ! " there are heights to attain,
Where Christ is transfigured yet again ;
Where earth will fade in the vision sweet,
And the soul press on with wingéd feet.

" Nothing to do ! " and thy Saviour said,
" Follow thou me in the path I tread."
Lord, lend thy help the journey through,
Lest, faint, we cry, " So much to do ! "
—Congregationalist.

FROM BUDDHA'S " PATH OF VIRTUE." —Not the failures of others, not sins of commission or omission, but his own misdeeds and negligences, should the sage take notice of. Like a beautiful flower, full of colour, but without scent, are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly. The scent of flowers does not travel against the wind ; but the odour of good people travels even against the wind ; a good man pervades every place. There is no fire like passion, there is no spark like hatred, there is no snare like folly, there is no torrent like greed. The fault of others is easily perceived. He who is tolerant, mild with fault-finders, free from passion among the passionate, him I call indeed a Brahmana.

CHEERFULNESS.

"Were it not worse than vain to close our eyes
Unto the azure sky and golden light,
Because the tempest cloud doth sometimes rise,
And glorious day must darken unto night?"

THERE are, indeed, very few who attend sufficiently to the bright things of this world, and the many enjoyments, simple, yet heart touching, that are calculated to move the feelings, to strengthen the affections, and to impart an additional interest to every day existence. The multitude are thoroughly devoted to the ways of toil, the employer as well as the employed. The latter, it may be, cannot fully help themselves, and the former have not a sufficient sense of appreciation. They exact every day and every hour, and are unwilling to permit of any interruption to the almost perpetual round of labour. And this goes on from year to year, until both parties are incapacitated by age or infirmity, and drop into the grave. Nay, even many of the aged and the tottering may be seen in this country steadily pursuing their darling game of gain, and this when in possession of large fortunes. The folly, the madness, the suicide of such a course, are inconceivable. And yet anyone who will pay attention to the subject, who will look carefully over the bills of mortality, will discover almost daily that some rich man has overtaken his physical powers and absolutely worked himself to death. To attain an independence is of course every way desirable. But, after having attained it, to continue on in the same path of care, labour, anxiety and exhaustion, seems to us inconsistent, not to say culpable. There is a season for all things, and that for reasonable enjoyment should not be neglected or disregarded. It is well, moreover, to be cheerful whenever we may. Why should we complain unnecessarily? Why should we fancy ills and evils that do not exist? Why should we seem moody and sad when the world is basking in sunshine?

The true philosophy is to bear the trials and vicissitudes, to which all are more or less liable, with as much patience and fortitude as possible, as well as to manifest a sense of due appreciation to Providence for the full enjoyment of the many blessings that are poured upon us with so lavish a hand. Cheerfulness, moreover, should be encouraged and cultivated on all occasions. Many a one has been made miserable, nay, has been driven insane, by a contrary course. None are exempt from anxiety, from care, from sorrow, and from anguish. These are all incident to man's imperfect

condition. But there are a thousand well-springs of hope in the human breast, and there are few who may not discover and enjoy sources of true pleasure. The folly is in closing our eyes to these, in misconceiving or neglecting the little courtesies of life, the social amenities, the religious and family festivals, the neighbourly reciprocities and recreations.

These are simple and harmless; and yet they are calculated to gladden, to cheer, and to make the spirit at once buoyant and bounding. But, if we turn aside from all these, if we do nothing for ourselves, and complain of the cheerfulness of others, we must expect to become peevish, dissatisfied, and fretful. We know of an industrious mechanic of this city, who labours from six to six daily, and yet whose voice for the whole time may be heard pouring forth some animating piece of music—simple, it is true, but cheerful and gay, and calculated at once to gratify his ear and soften his toil. He takes the world as it is, labours diligently and constantly, and yet, instead of complaining, he endeavours to while the hours away by as much melody as he can make.

It is of course difficult at times to resist a fit of melancholy or *ennui*, to chase away the moody shadows that would encompass the mind, cloud the spirit, and agitate the brain! Nevertheless, it is the true philosophy to have as little to do with these shadowy croakers as possible. If we encourage them they will be sure to return again. Nay, they will become our masters, and rule us with despotic sway. Better, far better, to invite the cheerful spirits, such as are hopeful, joyous, and radiant with promise. Better to imagine that tomorrow will be bright with prosperity and sunshine than dark with vicissitude and storm. It is quite enough to bear the evils that really exist, and from which we cannot escape, while it is weak and unnecessary to fancy others at hand, especially if there be no real cause for any such apprehension. How many a wretched suicide, had he only postponed the fatal act a few days longer, would have seen the clouds and darkness which involved his fortunes at the time of the self-murder melt away before a brighter and better day! The real doctrine is to enjoy ourselves reasonably, to be grateful to Providence for our comforts and blessings, to stand up manfully against misfortune, to deserve a change for the better, and to believe that such change will sooner or later attend upon and crown our resolute and manly efforts.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

OUR THOUGHT OF GOD.—No man can believe too much good of God.—*Dr. A. Clark.*

REMEMBER.—When death, the great reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we regret, but of our severity.—*George Eliot.*

FOR THE BOYS.—The noblest recollection a man can have is the memory of temptation successfully resisted while in the years of boyhood.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE AUTHOR OF "PARADISE LOST."—If, therefore, the Father be the God of Christ, and the same be our God, and if there be none other God but one, there can be no God beside the Father.—*John Milton.*

JOHN LOCKE ON SOUL LIBERTY.—No men, or society of men, have any authority to impose their opinions or interpretations on any other the meanest Christian, since, in matters of religion, every man must know, and believe, and give an account for himself.

THE CHILD CRITIC.—An old minister says that the best criticism he ever received on his preaching was from a little fellow who had been following his sermon attentively and suddenly spoke out, as he heard a repetition of a remark previously made, "You said that afore."

WHAT YOUNG MEN SHOULD DO.—(1) Every young man should make the most of himself, intellectually, morally, and physically. (2) He should depend upon his own efforts to accomplish these results. (3) He should be willing to take advice from those competent to give it, and to follow such advice, unless his own judgment or conviction, properly founded, should otherwise direct. (4) If he is unfortunate enough to have a rich and indulgent father, he must do the best he can under the circumstances, which will be to conduct himself very much as though he had not those obstacles to overcome. (5) He should never be discouraged by small beginnings, but remember that all great results have been wrought out from apparently slight causes. (6) He should never, under any circumstances, be idle. If he cannot find the employment he prefers, let him come as near his desires as possible—he will thus reach the object of his ambition. (7) All young men have "inalienable rights," among which none is greater or more sacred than the privilege to be somebody.

—Dunn.

CORBAN.—When a Jew did not wish to give anything to any one, he thought he had only to cry out "Corban," meaning a gift to religion. As if he said, "My dear friend, I am very sorry I cannot bestow upon you what you ask for, but the fact is, a solemn religious obligation forbids; I have vowed to God, for the use of the Temple, just what you happen to need." Even a debtor, we are told, would sometimes thus evade the claims of his creditors; and our Saviour reproves the Pharisees for authorising this mode of exemption from filial obligations. "Ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother, making the work of God of none effect through your tradition." The parents, the wife, all the kindred, might be starving, but what then? Religion was the first and highest duty, and to the service of the Temple had been consecrated by sacred oblation all that was due to the claims of domestic relations, as well as of ordinary charity and common honesty.

PROCRASTINATION.—Near the close of his life Patrick Henry laid his hand on the Bible, and said to a friend, "Here is a book worth more than all others; yet it is my misfortune never to have read it with proper attention until lately." William Pitt, when he came to die, said: "I fear that I have, like many others, neglected my religious duties too much to have any ground to hope that they can be efficacious on my death-bed."

THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCHES.—It would be safe for a man to resolve to admit into his theology nothing which is not sustained by the devotional writings of true Christians of every denomination. It would be easy to construct from such writings, received and sanctioned by Romanists, Lutherans, Reformed and Remonstrants, a system of theology, such as would satisfy any intelligent and devout Christian in the world.—*Dr. Chas. Hodge.*

THE JESUIT OATH.—The following is said to be the oath taken by every Jesuit upon his introduction to the order. If so, they are unquestionably a dangerous class, and it is no wonder that even Roman Catholic Governments, and even popes, found it necessary to condemn and expel them from their borders:—"I do renounce and disown any allegiance as due to any heretical king, prince, or state, named Protestants, or obedience to any of their inferior magistrates or officers. I do further declare the doctrine of the Church of England, of the Calvinists, Huguenots, and others of the name of Protestants, to be damnable, and they themselves are damned and to be damned, that will not forsake the same. I do further declare that I will help, assist, and advise all or any of his Holiness' agents in any place wherever I shall be, in England, Scotland, Ireland, or any other territory or kingdom I shall come to; and do my utmost to extirpate the heretical Protestants' doctrine, and to destroy all their pretended powers, regal or otherwise. I do further promise and declare, that notwithstanding I am dispensed with to assume any religion heretical for the propagation of the Mother Church's interest, to keep secret and private all her agents' counsels from time to time, as they intrust me, and not to divulge, directly or indirectly, by word, writing, or circumstance whatever, but to execute all that shall be proposed, given in charge, or discovered unto me by you, my ghostly father, or by any of this sacred convent. All of which I, A. B., do swear by the blessed Trinity and blessed Sacrament, which I am now to receive, to perform, and on my part to keep inviolably. And to call the heavenly and glorious host of heaven to witness these, my real intentions, and to keep this my oath. In testimony hereof, I take this most holy and blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and witness the same further with my hand and seal in the face of this holy convent."—*Jesuit's Oath, as quoted by Usher.*

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